Zechariah 8:1-8

1 The word of the Lord of hosts came to me, saying:
2 Thus says the Lord of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great wrath.
3 Thus says the Lord: I will return to Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; Jerusalem shall be called the faithful city, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts shall be called the holy mountain.
4 Thus says the Lord of hosts: Old men and old women shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of their great age.
5 And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets.
6 Thus says the Lord of hosts: Even though it seems impossible to the remnant of this people in these days, should it also seem impossible to me, says the Lord of hosts?
7 Thus says the Lord of hosts: I will save my people from the east country and from the west country;
8 and I will bring them to live in Jerusalem. They shall be my people and I will be their God, in faithfulness and in righteousness.

11-17

11 But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as in the former days, says the Lord of hosts.
12 For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield its fruit, the ground shall give its produce, and the skies shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.
13 Just as you have been a
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cursing among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you and you shall be a blessing. Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong.

14 For thus says the Lord of hosts: Just as I purposed to bring disaster upon you, when your ancestors provoked me to wrath, and I did not relent, says the Lord of hosts,

15 so again I have purposed in these days to do good to Jerusalem and to the house of Judah; do not be afraid.

16 These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace,

17 do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath; for all these are things that I hate, says the Lord.

WORD POWER!!!

• **Devise** – To plan.
• **Oath** – A sworn promise.

GETTING READY!!

Zechariah was a priest who lived in biblical times. He followed the ways of Moses. Zechariah was called to tell a great message. His message was that of hope, peace, and prosperity for God’s people in the future. This was amazing news from the prophet. They could now be joyous about what was going to happen in their future.

Have you ever received good news? How did it make you feel? Zechariah’s message not only uplifted the people, but also reminded them that better days were surely coming. God was going to restore all that had been lost and taken. We can believe in God’s promises of love, peace, and justice. Though the people had suffered due to others’ actions, God never forgot about the remnant that remained true to God.
In today’s passage we will read about Zechariah’s message to: speak the truth, make peace with one another, and not devise evil plans. These three portions of Zechariah’s message to the people help us to see that God had a plan for the restoration of the remnant upon Israel’s return to their homeland.

**INTO GOD’S WORD!!!**

Imagine being in a strange land and you are uncertain about the future. You are not sure if you are going to live or die. However, a messenger comes and gives you a message of hope! This is the premise of our story today in Zechariah. The people were feeling a sense of hopelessness and were then told, in the midst of it all, their future was hopeful and secure!

The Lord had promised Abram that his ancestors would be a blessing to the world. However, disobedience turned that into a curse. Zechariah’s message promised that the ability to bless the world would be restored by God. Zechariah tells the people that their waiting will not be vain. Soon there will be: feasting and not fasting, the fields will produce crops, and the old and young will be joyful in the streets. These things tell us that the city of Jerusalem will not only have a new name, “the holy city,” but people and crops will flourish there!

God’s promise of peace and prosperity among God’s people will occur in their future. We can rejoice like those in that time because God still forgives and restores us! Even when we do not know or see what is happening around us, God has not forgotten about us. We only have to trust God and believe God’s promises are going to come to pass.
USING GOD’S WORD!!!

Have you ever asked the question, where is God in this world? God is all around us! Creation is a testament of God’s handiwork and creativity. As we are made in God’s image, we too should have God inside us, ready to share God with the world. Name some ways you see God present in the world and in the community. How do you respond to God’s presence, making it known to others?

With a world that looks confusing and filled with doubt, we are called to bring hope, peace, and justice wherever we go. We can balance our uncertainty or fear about things around us with the certainty that God will do what God says! We can have an expectancy of God’s ongoing presence and work in the world. As Christians we should live in such a way that invites unbelievers to accept God’s eternal peace and justice. Our lives, what we say and do, should give people hope. Our hope is in God and we can trust God to do exactly what God says God will do.

REMIX!!!

This week tell a group of friends, someone in your family, or in your community about God. Share with them why you have hope and are excited about your future. As Christians we know our future is secure by the one who created the whole world! We can rest and be assured that God’s reign of peace and justice is coming!

QUESTIONS

1. What is peace to you?

2. Create “thinking of you” cards with scriptures and pictures to be given to the sick and shut-in.
3. What was the name of the prophet in the scripture lesson today?

**PRAISE GOD!!!**

Sometimes we will not see eye to eye even with people in our family. That is okay. We are all human and at times make mistakes. However, God’s divine plan will come to pass even amid what might look like a terrible situation. Write down ways you can forgive others when they have hurt your feelings. When you are done, write down how you want to be forgiven when you do others wrong.

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In our lesson today, God forgave and remembered the remnant who trusted God even in the midst of bad situations. God promised them restoration and a new place where joy and love would abide. We, too, should want to create places for people to experience God’s love and peace on earth.

**CLOSING PRAYER**

God, thank you for keeping your promises. Thank you for your forgiveness and loving us despite what we do. We ask that you forgive us of our sins and make us brand new. Thank you, God, for inviting us to pray for others. Please remind us that you give us hope even in the midst of uncertainty. Amen.